

## **ULSTER SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT LTD**

(Company Limited by Guarantee and not having a Share Capital)

Minutes of a Board of Directors Meeting

13.30, Wednesday 26 February 2020

Cambrai Street, Belfast

### **Present**

Mr W Leathem	Chairman
Mr R Donnelly	Director
Mr D O'Hara	Director
Mr R Havlin	Director
Ms J Cowan	Director
Ms C Magill	Director
Mr W Atkinson	Chief Executive
Mrs SJ Mowbray	Company Secretary/Head of Corporate Services
Mr S Jackson	Head of Manufacturing & Recycling
Mr D Cowan	Head of Employment Services

### **Apologies**

#### **1. Conflict of Interest**

1.1. A perceived conflict of interest was noted for the SMT in relation to the pension benefit re-design.

#### **2. Minutes of the meeting held on 31 January 2020**

2.1. Minutes from meeting on 31 January 2020 were approved.

2.2. An update on the following actions from January's Board was provided:

- Additional detail in relation to the costs of long-term absence was provided.

2.3. All actions are cleared.

**AP: Share detail of the long-term sickness absence campaign with the Board.**

#### **3. Chairman's Business**

3.1. The Chairman updated members in relation to:

- Paula Bradley accepted the Chair's invitation to visit Usel which will be arranged;

#### **4. Pension Scheme Update**

4.1. The CEO provided an update as part of the CEO report – see Section 5.

#### **5. Chief Executive's Report**

5.1. The Chief Executive provided the following update:

## **Business Overview**

5.2. As Usel continues to review the performance across its various business units, a risk has been identified within Vintage Satchel. Vintage Satchel has been in decline over several years and despite best efforts including developing a knowledge partnership with UJJ, investigating new markets and new designs, overall performance has not improved. Following the resignation of one of two remaining skilled leather operatives, options are being considered for this line of business.

5.3. A concern has now been identified with the roof on one of the storage units on Cambrai Street site. The roof has been inspected by an approved contractor and advised Usel that should the fault deteriorate further there may be a risk of an asbestos incident. DfC have been made aware of the potential risk with a need to formally record the risk on the risk register.

## **New Business Development**

5.4. Usel has been successful in securing a new confidential shredding contract with a large housing association. This further supports the view that it is a new sustainable business work stream.

5.5. A capital request was submitted to the Department under NICS transformation fund for £250,000 to purchase a new mobile shredding unit. This project would provide a possible cost reduction to the wider NICS of approximately £300,000 over the term of the project (four years).

5.6. A 12-month pilot has been agreed with a community services provider to create another Ability coffee shop. The new partnership will allow Usel to further grow our provision in the local area, with a low degree of risk as the initial 12-month pilot there will be no requirement to engage in a lease and/or pay rent on the premises. This provides another opportunity to additional job and work placement opportunities and broaden our service offering within the local community.

**AP: Briefing paper to be provided to Board in relation to new pilots.**

5.7. The Board were updated on the follow-up meeting with the charitable organisation.

## **Pension Redesign**

5.8. DfC have advised us that approval to issue a direct award contract for the final review of the pension redesign business case has been obtained from CPD. A submission will be sent for Ministerial approval. At this point it is not clear as to when the final review will be complete. Again, the need for urgency has been highlighted.

**AP: The Board to write to the Minister of Department for Communities to highlight the concerns regarding the pension.**

## **6. Head of Corporate Services Report**

### **Finance**

6.1. The Directors reviewed the summary financial position against budget, for **January**, and noted a surplus of £31k. Budget forecast for **January** was £33k surplus, therefore this is a variance of £2k.

6.2. YTD we have delivered a surplus of £120k. Budget forecast for YTD position, as at 31 January was a surplus of £57k. This is a positive variance of £63k.

6.3. It was noted that income and expenditure lines for YTD were within 10% variance tolerance.

6.4. Clarification was requested by Board members in relation to increasing indirect costs and legal costs.

### **HR**

6.5. The average absenteeism rates for 2019-20 are as follow:

	<b>Uset January 2020</b>	<b>Uset YTD Average</b>
Absenteeism rates - short term-National Average 3% dependant on demographics	1.14%	2%
Absenteeism rates - long term (+4 weeks)-National Average 2.5% dependant on demographics	2.82%	3%

\* This equates to five staff – one has since returned to work.

6.6. No other substantive issues to note.

## **ICT & Compliance**

6.7. There were no incidences of ICT or data breaches to report.

## **7. Business Planning 2020-21**

7.1. Mr Atkinson presented the risks and opportunities for 2020-21.

7.2. The Board agreed to maintain the status quo in 2020-21 to deliver the final year of the Corporate Strategy.

## **8. Adult Safe Guarding Issues**

8.1. No new issues to report.

## **9. Health & Safety**

9.1. The Health & Safety forum continues to operate on monthly basis. No issues to note.

## **10. Risk management**

10.1. Amendments to the risk register were noted and approved by the Board.

## **11. Draft Policies for Approval**

- 11.1. The following draft policies/strategies were approved by the Board:
- i. Young People and Adults Safeguarding Policy – Jan 2020 review
  - ii. Draft Anti-Bullying Policy – Learner Participants Jan 2020

## **12. Any Other Business**

12.1. The Board resolved that the Danske bank Cardholder application for the Company Secretary, SJ Mowbray, should be entered into. The resolution was duly passed in accordance with Usel's Memo and Articles of Association and remains in full force and effect.

## **13. Date of Next Meeting**

13.1. 11 March 2020 meeting to discuss Business Plan 2020-21.

13.2. Next Board meeting will be 25 March 2020, which will include the ARAC.